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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABIDJAN 000244

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [KDEM](#) [IV](#)  
SUBJECT: FN URGE PM TO RESIGN

Classified By: PolEcon Chief Silvia Eiriz for reasons 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (U) Summary. Forces Nouvelles (FN) delegates met in Bouake April 12-13 and issued a communique on April 14 rejecting accusations that they are responsible for stalling implementation of the fourth supplementary agreement (Ouaga IV) to the Ouagadougou Political Agreement (OPA). The communique also called on Prime Minister Soro to resign to avoid being a party to maneuvers by President Gbagbo's camp to postpone elections in order to hold on to power. According to the April 15 press, the Prime Minister's Spokesman said the Prime Minister will not resign since he enjoys a good working relationship with Gbagbo and still has the support of the FN. End Summary.

#### FN Reject Charges of Blocking Process

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¶2. (U) The general delegates of the FN met in Bouake April 12-13 and issued a communique on April 14 responding to FPI charges that the FN are holding up implementation of Ouaga IV by blocking: identification, transfer of power from the FN zone commanders (comzones) to the prefects, and redeployment of customs and tax agents as well as law enforcement. The FN's statement noted that the identification process is proceeding with approximately 80 percent of potential voters already registered and that all political parties are represented on the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI). It pointed out that the Ministry of Interior was responsible for canceling the March 4 ceremony to mark the transfer of power from the comzones to the prefects. The statement went on to say that on March 4 the Prime Minister launched unified revenue collection in the areas of the country under FN control and that it is up to the relevant Minister to take the additional steps necessary. Regarding deployment of law enforcement, the statement pointed out that Ouaga IV provides that the Integrated Command Center (ICC) deploy mixed units composed of security forces from both the FN and the government. The statement further noted that Prime Minister Soro as FN Secretary General froze FN security force promotions in 2005 while these have continued to be awarded by the government.

¶3. (U) The FN statement concluded by accusing President Gbagbo's FPI party of obstructing credible elections because they fear losing power. It urged Prime Minister Soro to resign in order to avoid being complicit with such "Machiavellian maneuvers." The statement urged Soro to return to Bouake to lead the Ivoirian people's struggle for the improvement of their daily lives.

¶4. (U) On April 10, Alain Lobognon, the Prime Minister's Communications Advisor, issued a statement in response to an article that appeared the same day in the government's "Fraternite Matin" newspaper accusing the FN of blocking Ouaga IV by insisting on the nomination of FN soldiers as prefects and sub-prefects. Lobognon's statement said such nominations were rejected by the FN when they were proposed by President Gbagbo during negotiations with Prime Minister

Soro and the OPA Facilitator.

Soro Won't Resign

15. (U) According to the April 15 press, the Prime Minister's spokesman, Meite Sindou, responded to the FN communique by saying it expresses the will of the FN delegates, but not that of the FN political directorate or the FN general staff.

Sindou reportedly noted that calls for the Prime Minister's resignation have been made in the past both by President Gbagbo's camp and the political opposition. According to press articles, Sindou said Soro could resign if there were a severe disagreement with the President or if the FN no longer supported him since he was named Prime Minister as FN leader.

Sindou reportedly went on to say that Soro will not resign since neither situation exists and that there is good collaboration between Soro and Gbagbo.

16. (C) Comment. The FN have clearly decided that they can no longer ignore accusations by the President's camp that they are to blame for the stalling of Ouaga IV. However, the communique by the FN delegates once again raises the question whether Soro is really in control of or in tune with the FN rank and file. The FN communique can be seen as sending a message to both Soro and Gbagbo. The message to the PM may be that the FN are watching carefully what he does and expect him to know where to draw the line in terms of cooperation with the Gbagbo camp. The message to the President's camp may be that if they force Soro to make too many concessions, they may find themselves having to deal with someone else. A power struggle on April 12 in Ferkessedougou between sector

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commander Inza Fofana and his deputy adds to concerns that the FN may be imploding or fragmenting.

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